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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1777  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 001328

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG, PRM, S/CRS  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL NGOS IN DARFUR FACE "SHRINKING HUMNATITARIAN SPACE"

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Senior UN humanitarian officials report that, despite improved cooperation with the Khartoum Government, international NGOs (INGOs) in Darfur are facing increased scrutiny and harassment from state authorities, possibly in connection with ICC prosecutor Ocampo's request that an arrest warrant be issued against President Bashir. As a result, INGOs are finding their ability to assist the local population increasingly frustrated, and staff morale is falling. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On August 27, UN officials briefed the monthly UN-Donor Principals' meeting on the deteriorating situation faced by international-humanitarian NGOs in Darfur. According to Deputy SRSG Ameera Haqq, cooperation with the national government on humanitarian issues has improved significantly. However, INGOs providing humanitarian assistance in Darfur face continued suspicion and impediments thrown up at the state level. According to Haqq, growing insecurity, bureaucratic harassment, and lack of access to affected populations are creating a "shrinking humanitarian space" within which the INGOs are able to work. Under these conditions, she reported, INGO morale in Darfur is deteriorating.

¶3. (SBU) The UNICEF Representative in Sudan, Ted Chaiban, endorsed and expanded on Haqq's observations, saying that official harassment is by no means limited to the state level. He reported that since ICC Chief Prosecutor Ocampo's July 14 request for an ICC arrest warrant against President Bashir, Khartoum authorities have been examining INGO files, including reports taken from victims of sexual abuse, under the pretense of "investigation." He believes that the GoS suspects the INGOs of having provided Ocampo with information that now serves as part of the basis of his case against Bashir.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: If the reported increased harassment of the humanitarian NGOs is in response to Ocampo's actions, it does not augur well for the humanitarian community should the ICC take action against - President Bashir. According to press reports, on August 28, NISS chief Salah Gosh told a forum at the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs that the GoS will eject from the country any NGOs "that exceed their mandate." We expect the regime to continue to show both the possibilities of greater cooperation and increased harassment of the NGO community (and others, such as the UN and diplomatic missions) in the run-up to any ICC action as a way of swaying the international community to allow an Article 16 exemption for Bashir at the Security Council. In August, USAID implementing partners have reported an increase in harassment and bureaucratic impediments, as reported in the UN briefing. USAID will report on specific cases and obstacles via septel.

FERNANDEZ